



NaturalGrowth Childhood Counselling

ABN: 71 783 760 966

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

NaturalGrowth Childhood Counselling is committed to providing a safe, confidential space, this includes keeping your private information safe. This policy outlines what personal information is collected, where it is collected from and how it is stored.

Where your personal information is collected from?

Personal information may be provided by you to Natural Growth Childhood Counselling via direct email, text messaging, online intake forms, questionnaires, phone conversations and in-person conversations.

With your permission, Natural Growth Childhood Counselling may request some information be exchanged with third parties such as, but not limited to, pediatricians, school or preschool staff, medical specialists or any other person agreed upon by you and the counsellor.

Visitors to the Natural Growth Childhood Counselling website, Facebook and Instagram pages need to be aware that such platforms often track browsing information. Natural Growth Childhood Counselling will never use this information to spam, sell or rent your contact details.

What personal information is collected

Personal information to be collected from people who make enquiries will include:

- Your name and the details of how you contacted Natural Growth Childhood Counselling. For example, your phone number, email address and/ or messenger contact.
- If the prospective client is a child, their name, age, school grade.
- Very brief reason for seeking support.

Personal information to be collected from people who become clients will include:

- Your name, phone number and email address – if the client is a child, this may be both parents / carers.
- Your address – if the client is a child living in shared care, the address of both parents / carers may be collected.



- You, or your child's date of birth
- The people you, or your child lives with.
- Occupation type and / or school and grade.
- The name and phone number of your nominated emergency contact person will also be collected. They will not be contacted unless required to support you as determined by yourself or Natural Growth Childhood Counselling.
- To provide you with a quality service, you will be asked questions about your, or your child's physical and mental health. It is your choice how much health information you share.
- If you or your child have recently had mental health assessments, educational or psychometric assessments or have received school reports, these might be requested. However, it is your choice if you want to share these with Natural Growth Childhood Counselling.

Counsellors are required to make brief 'case notes' about clients after each session. This generally includes reasons the client has requested counselling support, their progress and challenges, and interventions and strategies explored.

Confidentiality and security of information

Natural Growth Childhood Counselling has taken all reasonable steps to ensure your personal information is secure. However, we cannot guarantee the security of information shared via the internet. This might include, but is not limited to, email, texting, Facebook Messenger, Instagram.

Information about clients and people who have booked a first session (even if they later cancel), is stored on the secure Halaxy platform for health professionals. Halaxy is protected by 'bank grade' security and servers are located in Australia. By law, most client information is required to be kept for 7 years from the final session or for children, until they are 25 years of age, after which time information may be destroyed.

Generally, all client information is confidential between the client and counsellor. If the counsellor believes it would be beneficial for information to be shared with another family member or other professional, this will be discussed with you and provided with your permission.

There are some exceptions where the counsellor must disclose information even if you do not give permission. They are:

- If a child, elderly person or person with a disability is at risk of significant harm (EG: due to neglect, physical, psychological or sexual abuse, threats of suicide or self-harm). Counsellors are required by law to contact appropriate



- support people or services which may include parents/carers, ambulance, police and/or Department of Communities and Justice/FACS.
- If a court orders the counsellor to provide information via subpoena.
 - If a serious, major crime has been or is likely to be committed, this must be reported to police.
 - If Government Health officials contact the counsellor for the purpose of Covid-19 contact tracing and request client name and contact details, the counsellor must provide this. Only the client's name, phone number, date, time and location of the session will be provided. This does *not* apply to clients participating in tele-counselling / zoom sessions.
 - To ensure clients receive a professional, ethical service and for the counsellor to maintain registration with PACFA, the counsellor undertakes clinical supervision with a registered professional supervisor. The counsellor might discuss with the supervisor ways to best support a client however, no identifying information about clients is disclosed.

As per Australian Privacy Law, in most circumstances, you may request access to your personal records by doing so in writing and verifying your identity. If approved, Natural Growth Childhood Counselling is required to provide information within 30 days. There may be a small administrative fee to cover any time to gather the information, printing required or postage.

Note, there are some grounds set out by the Australian Privacy Principles which allow organisations to either refuse access entirely or redact some information.

If you believe any personal information is incorrect and needs to be updated, it is your responsibility to advise Natural Growth Childhood Counselling.

Websites and Social Media

Clients are not to seek 'friend' requests of the counsellor on personal social media platforms. It is acceptable however for you to follow Natural Growth Childhood Counselling's pages as tips and strategies are often posted. The counsellor will never make social media comments that would identify you as a client.

Natural Growth Childhood Counselling reminds people to be aware that web browsers, Facebook, Instagram, Google Analytics and Wix contain 'cookies' that collect identifiable information for the purpose of refining marketing and advertising. As such, viewing our website, Facebook page or Instagram page might lead to further similar pages or stories appearing on your own social media feeds depending on your own internet and social media security settings.

Natural Growth Childhood Counselling will take all reasonable steps to monitor and delete inappropriate comments made on the Natural Growth Childhood



Counselling Facebook and Instagram posts. However Natural Growth Childhood Counselling is ultimately not responsible for the comments made by others.

Counselling Locations and Privacy

Natural Growth Childhood Counselling predominantly supports people in public outdoor, natural settings. Some adult sessions may occur in carefully selected cafes, agreed upon by you. You will always be given a choice of location.

Being in public increases the chance of either the client or counsellor being recognised. You and the counsellor will agree on what to say and do if someone approaches who you or the counsellor knows.

Tele-Counselling Privacy

In certain circumstances, clients may request a session to be conducted via phone or video platform.

- The counsellor will ensure she is working in a private, confidential space.
- It is the client's responsibility to ensure the space they are in is also safe for them and without distractions.
- Recording of sessions or screen shots by the counsellor or client is not permitted.
- Ensure your device / computer /phone is fully charged and connected to the internet. Please test your speaker and sound prior to the session. Wearing headphones will help increase your privacy as others will not be able to easily hear what the counsellor is saying.
- For a session with a child under 16 years of age, a parent/carer must be in the home for a check in with the counsellor at the start of the session. For young children under 10yrs, the parent might be asked to stay with the child. This will be agreed on at the first meeting.

Amendments

Natural Growth Childhood Counselling reserves the right to amend the Privacy Policy at any time. The current version will always be accessible on this website for you to view.

For any questions or concerns please contact jo@ngchildhoodcounselling.com

Last updated 19th July 2022